

**NAME: Donald May**  
**PARTY: Democratic**  
**SEEKING: School Board, District 2**



**Why are you seeking your office?**

I'm confident that I, as a school board member, can help Gwinnett's students, parents, teachers, and other citizens create a superior public education system. High performing schools are the bedrock of our communities and our economic success. We all depend upon a quality education system. As a father and a 20-year resident of the county, I want to ensure that our school system not only stays strong but also continually improves, as we face the challenges that a growing and diverse population brings.

**What do you expect to accomplish if elected?**

Every student is gifted we need to find the ways to tap into their gifts. I have had countless conversations with students, teachers and administrators in our school system and one general theme rang out: We must work to remove the barriers to learning. Two barriers are: 1. Frustrated teachers: Teachers must be empowered, respected and paid accordingly. We have some great teachers however they are constantly being asked to do more with less, this can bring on frustration. 2. Keep students excited about learning: We must continuously look for ways to keep our students focused upon their education.

**What distinguishes your candidacy?**

I listen! Two of the main jobs of the school board is to set vision and policy. However, before those things can be done you have to listen to the needs of the students, teachers and the public. Because I do not have an employment history with the school system I have no preconceived ideas or baggage about what 'I think' they need or want – instead I actually listen to determine what the true and current needs are. Once those needs are determined my experience at solving complex issues and building consensus can be used to strengthen our school system.

**How can we improve school safety?**

Currently our schools take a 'multi-layered' approach to safety: School Resource Officers, video camera systems, controlled door entry and emergency response plans. I suggest adding another layer of technology that would provide alerts. 1. An anonymous app that students can use to report any type of suspicious activity. The app would be convenient to use which might encourage it's use. 2. Software to monitor students 'public' social media post for keys words that might suggest acts of

violence, suicide or bullying. Once the privacy concerns are addressed this could be a proactive approach to identifying acts before they occur.

**Pick one issue. Expand on how you will address it,**

Gwinnett's graduation rates. They are hovering around 79 percent. This means Gwinnett is leaving 1 in 5 children behind. With our resources, we can do better. First, we need to get students reading at an earlier age. Studies have shown that 3rd and 4th grade reading levels are an indicator of future success. We need to address the various reasons for students being behind in reading at that point. Second, we need to keep in mind that not every student will go to college. We should expand curriculums that encourage the trades and other non-college type career paths.

**Please give a 100-word summary on your background:**

Over the course of my professional career, I have been successful in both the class room and the board room as an Adjunct Business Instructor and a member of several boards, including the Coalition for Health and Human Services and the Salvation Army. Currently, I am a First Vice President with an Atlanta bank. Long-time GCPS Mentor, and a Little League football coach. And of course, I have a deep and abiding personal interest in, and knowledge of, our schools: Two of my children are graduates of Collins Hill High, and I have a granddaughter enrolled in GCPS.